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Message Text

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SUBJECT: US-UK BILATERALS, MARCH 4-5

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1. US-UK VERIFICATION DISCUSSIONS MARCH 4-5 WERE A USEFUL

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FORUM FOR A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THIS SUBJECT AT THE WORKING LEVEL. TALKS COVERED A BROAD RANGE OF VERIFICATION SUBJECTS, BUT PRIMARILY CENTERED ON NEGOTIATED INSPECTION MEASURES WHICH MIGHT BE PROPOSED TO THE EAST AND ON THE TIMING AND CONTENT OF SUCH A PROPOSAL.

2. BRITISH SIDE AGREED WITH US ON THE NEED FOR SOMETHING MORE TO BE SAID ON VERIFICATIOH IN VIENNA IN THE RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE. BEFORE THAT COULD BE DONE, HOWEVER, THEY FELT THAT THERE SHOULD BE A THOROUGH DISCUSSION IN NATO AND THAT SUCH A DISCUSSION COULD NOT BE AVOIDED IN ANY CASE. THEREFORE, THEY DID NOT BELIEVE GOING FORWARD WITH A STATEMENT CONTAINING SPECIFIC NEGOTIATED MEASURES, AS THE US PROPOSED, 'AS POSSIBLE BUT THAT A GENERAL RESTATEMENT OF THE CURRENT WESTERN POSITION IN MORE EMPHATIC TERMS COULD BE AGREED. THIS, THEY FELT, WOULD BE ADEQUATE TO SIGNAL TO THE EAST THE CONTINUING INTEREST OF THE 'EST IN VERIFICATION. THEY ADDED THAT THE UK AND THE FRG WOULD HOLD

TALKS ON VERIFICATION IN 2 OR 3 WEEKS AT WHICH TIME THEY WOULD DESCRIBE BRITISH VIEWS ON VERIFICATION AND SEEK AN EXPLANATION OF THE FRG'S POSITION.

3. UK FEPS SAID THAT THE US-FRG DRAFT TEXT (REFTEL) WAS NOT VERY SATISFACTORY, PARTICULARLY IF GERMAN BRACKETS WERE ACCEPTED AND MOBILE TEAMS AND AERIAL INSPECTION DROPPED. THEY INCORRECTLY PERCEIVED THAT SUCH A TEXT WOULD LIMIT THE ALLIANCE TO ONE NEGOTIATED MEASURE WHILE FORECLOSING WITHOUT FULL ALLIANCE CONSIDERATION OTHERS WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL. FACED WITH SUCH A TEXT, THEY SAID THAT THEY WOULD BE OBLIGED TO REFER THE MATTER TO MINISTERS. THEY TOOK THE POSITION THAT AN ADEQUATE OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR ALLIES TO PUT FORWARD AND DISCUSS A FULL RANGE OF MEASURES IN NATO AND THAT, IF THE FRG HAD POLITICAL OBJECTIONS TO MOBILES AND AERIAL INSPECTION, THEY SHOULD TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF SAYING SO OPENLY. HOWEVER, THE UK RECOGNIZED THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF PERSUADING THE FRG TO DROP ITS POLITICAL OBJECTIONS TO MOBILES WAS VIRTUALLY NIL, AND THAT THE UK DID NOT WANT TO ENGAGE IN A MAJOR CONFRONTATION WITH THE

FRG OVER MOBILES.

4. BRITISH SIDE ADDED THAT THEY WERE NOT SANGUINE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF WORKING OUT A STATEMENT IN NATO WITHOUT ADEQUATE DEBATE. HOWEVER, SUCH AN ALLIANCE REVIEW NEED NOT TO BE TOO TIME CONSUMING. THEY POINTED OUT THAT OTHER ALLIES HAD VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF VERIFICATION AND WERE UNLIKELY TO BE RUSHED INTO A POSITION WITHOUT

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ADEQUATE ALLIANCE DISCUSSION. IN THE CASE OF THE TRUNCATED US-FRG TEXT, THEY PREDICTED THAT SOME OF THE ALLIES (NOTABLY THE BELGIAHS AND CANADIANS) WERE SURE TO OBJECT TO THE ABSENCE OF MOBILE INSPECTION MEASURES IF THEY DID NOT KNOW WHY THE US AND FRG HAD DECIDED TO DROP MOBILES AND WOULD LIKELY MAKE THIS AN ISSUE IN THE DEBATE, WHICH MIGHT BE DIVISIVE.

5. AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE GENERAL BUT EMPHATIC STATE-MENT PREFERRED BY THE UK, BRITISH REPS SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER GOING INTO NATO WITH THE FULL US-FRG TEXT INCLUDING THE MEASURES NOW IN BRAKCETS. WE WOULD SAY AT THAT TIME THAT E UNDERSTAND FRG OBJECTIONS TO MOBILE TEAMS AND FOR THAT REASON ASK THAT THE MEASURE BE DROPPED. THIS COURSE, THE BRITISH ARGUED, WOULD ALLOW DISCUSSION OF THE MEASURE IN THE ALLIANCE AND PLACE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ADVOCATING ITS DELETION ON THE FRG. THEY MAINTAINED THAT SUCH A STATEMENT COULD BE WORDED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID EMBARRASSMENT TO THE FRG. BRITISH REPS SUGGESTED THAT THE INEVITABLE DEBATE MIGHT BE MORE AMIABLE IF NATO

DISCUSSION WERE BASED ON A MATRIX, WHICH LISTED ALL THE POSSIBLE NIMS AND WEIGHED THEM AGAINST THE CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. THEN THE ALLIES COULD CLEARLY SEE THAT THE OBJECTIONS TO MOBILE TEAMS WERE POLITICAL RATHER THAN MILITARY.

6. HE DESCRIBED THE US POSITION AS BEING THAT A PROPOSAL CONTAINING SPECIFIC NEGOTIATED MEASURES SHOULD BE MADE IN VIENNA IN THE NEAR FUTURE, BUT THAT WE HAD NOT YET REACHED A DECISION ON WHAT MEASURES SHOULD BE INCLUDED. IN SUPPORT IHG OUR CASE WE CITED THE TIMING ARGUMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE BEFORE AND WHICH THE BRITISH ACCEPTED--ALTHOUGH THEY

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DID NOT PERCEIVE THE SAME URGENCY THAT WE DID. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST IN THE VEFIFICATION OF AN MBFR AGREEMENT 'OULD LIKELY BE VERY HIGH. WE SAID THAT WE WOULD BE HARD PUT TO DEFEND THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING RECORD, WHICH CONTAINS ONLY GENERAL VERIFICATION STATEMENTS, BEFORE CONGRESS. THIS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY AWKWARD, 4E ARGUED, SINCE VERIFICATION IS THE ONLY ASPECT OF THE ALLIED PROPOSAL WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ELABORATED SINCE ITS INITIAL PRESENTATION.

7. AS FOR AN EMPHATIC GENERAL RESTATEMENT OF THE CURRENT WESTERN POSITION AS SUGGESTED BY THE UK SIDE, WE SAID THAT IT WAS OUR VIEW AND THAT OF THE US DELEGATION THAT SUCH A STATEMENT WO'LD BE OF LIMITED USE. IT COULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE SINCE THE VAGUENESS OF THE WESTERN

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VERIFICATION POSITION WOULD STAND IN CONTRAST TO THE REST
OF THE ALLIED PROPOSALS, THUS CONFIRMING TO THE EAST ITS
RELATIVE 'NIMPORTANCE TO THE EST. AS FOR A STATEMENT
OF THE TYPE PROPOSED IN PARA 5 ABOVE, IT WAS RECOGNIZED
THAT SUCH AN APPROACH PROBABLY 'OULD PRESENT DIFFICULTIES
VIS-A-VIS THE FRG, AND THAT ANY POINTING OF THE FINGER
AT THE FRG SHOULD BE MINIMIZED.

8. IN TERMS OF POSSIBLE FRICTION IN NATO, WE POINTED OUT
THAT THE ALLIANCE WAS A FLEXIBLE INSTITUTION ABLE TO
ACCOMMODATE DIFFERENCESOF VIEW AMONG ALLIES WITHOUT
DAMAGE TO ITS BASIC COHESION. IF THE UK OR OTHER ALLIES
FELT OBLIGED TO OPPOSE OUR PRESENTATION, AND THE MATTER
OBTAINED A THOROUGH AIRING, WE WERE NOT DISMAYED BY
THE PROSPECT OF INTERNAL ALLIED DEBATE ON THIS ISSUE.

9. WHILE REITERATING US DESIRE TO MAKE A MORE DETAILED
AND SPECIFIC STATEMENT ON VERIFICATION IN VIENNA SOON, WE
ADDED THAT THE US HAD NOT YET REACHED A FINAL DECISION ON
WHAT NEXT STEPS TO TAKE AND THAT E 'OULD OF COURSE CONSIDE
BRITISH VIEWS. WE SAID THAT WHEN WE REACHED A DECISION
WE 'OULD INFORM HMG. KISSINGER

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